Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Please **amend** claims 1, 3, 5, 14, 25, 27-28, 30, 43, 48, 50-51, 53, 55, 57, 62, 71, 73-74, 76, 80, 85, 92, 94-98, 100, 102-103 and 105. Please **add** claims 106-184. Please **cancel** claims 7, 26, 34, 49, 72, 93 and 101.

1. (Currently Amended) A method for controlling access to database information, comprising:

receiving a database query directed to a database engine;

initially evaluating at least one system performance characteristic associated with at least one database engine, selected from one or more of system management parameters of said at least one database engine, a user-access record of said at least one database engine, and the query to determine system usage of said at least one database engine, prior to submission of the query to the database engine; and

rejecting the query if the system usage surpasses a threshold value.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said receiving further comprises:

receiving the database query from a user.

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, wherein said evaluating the query to determine system usage further comprises:

evaluating the query based on ~~at least one~~ one or more of: a parameter of the query, a number of relational databases used by the query, a size of a data field to be searched for the query, an availability of resources of a system maintaining the database engine, a number of relational database tables to be employed for the query, a limitation imposed on a size of a query result set, a number of columns of data to be returned in a query result set, a cost of a similar stored query and/or a number of function calls for the query.

4. (Original) The method of claim 3, further comprising:

assigning a score to the query based on said evaluating, wherein said rejecting occurs when the score surpasses the threshold value.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 4, wherein said assigning comprises:

assigning a value to a plurality of system performance variables;

determining a cost of the query based on a weighted evaluation of ~~at least one~~ one or more of said variables.

6. (Original) The method of claim 3. further comprising:

storing the query and the determined cost of the query.

7. (canceled)

8. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said threshold value is determined based on a category of a user submitting the query.

9. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein the category of the user is determined based on a history of queries submitted by the user.

10. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein said history of queries comprises histories of scores of previous queries submitted by the user.

11. (Original) The method of claim 8, wherein the category comprises one of a plurality of categories of increasing accessibility rights to search the database.

12. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

submitting the query to the search engine if the system usage is less than the threshold value.

13. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said rejecting further comprises:

editing the query so that the system usage is less than the threshold value; and

submitting the query to the database engine.

14. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 13, wherein said editing comprises ~~at least one~~ one or more of:

providing an alternate search parameter, and/or providing a limit on the number of results for the query.

15. (Original) The method of claim 13, further comprising:

transmitting a result of the query, after said submitting.

16. (Original) The method of claim 15, wherein said transmitting further

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comprises:

transmitting the result of the query to the user.

17. (Original) The method of claim 15, wherein said transmitting further comprises:

transmitting a portion of the result of the query to a user.

18. (Original) The method of claim 13, wherein said editing further comprises: substantially optimizing the query for usage of system resources.

19. (Original) The method of claim 13, wherein said submitting comprises:

submitting the query to a second database engine.

20. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said rejecting comprises:

offering to provide a portion of a result of the rejected query to the user; submitting the rejected query to the server; and

providing a portion of the result of the query to the user.

21. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said rejecting further comprises:

offering an alternative query in place of the rejected query.

22. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein said receiving, evaluating and rejecting are performed by a screening server prior to submission of the query to a database engine.

23. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the database query comprises structured query language.

24. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

storing the query.

25. (Currently Amended) A computer readable medium encoded with processing instructions for implementing a method, performed by a computer, for controlling access to database information, the method comprising:

receiving a database query directed to a database engine;

initially evaluating at least one system performance characteristic associated with at least one database engine, selected from one or more of system management parameters of said at least one database engine, a user-access record of said at least one database engine, and

the query to determine system usage <u>of said at least one database engine</u>, prior to submission of the query to the database engine; and

rejecting the query if the system usage surpasses a threshold value.

26. (Canceled)

27. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for controlling access to database information, comprising:

a processor; and

a memory in communication with the processor, the memory for storing a plurality of processing instructions enabling the processor to:

receive a database query directed to a database engine;

<u>initially</u> evaluate at least one system performance characteristic associated with at least one database engine<u>, selected from one or more of</u> system management parameters <u>of said at least one database engine</u>, a user-access record <u>of said at least one database engine</u>, and the query to determine system usage <u>of said at least one database engine</u>, prior to submission of the query to the database engine; and

reject the query if the system usage surpasses a threshold value.

28. (Currently Amended) A method for controlling access to database information, comprising:

receiving a database query directed to a database engine;

<u>initially</u> evaluating at least one system performance characteristic associated with at least one database engine<u>, selected from one or more of</u> system management parameters <u>of said at least one database engine</u>, a user-access record <u>of said at least one database engine</u>, and the query to determine system usage <u>of said at least one database engine</u>, prior to submission of the query to the database engine; and

submitting the query to the database engine if the system usage does not surpass a threshold value.

29. (Original) The method of claim 28, wherein said receiving further comprises:

receiving the database query from a user.

30. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 28, wherein said evaluating the

query to determine system usage further comprises:

evaluating the query based on ~~at least one~~ one or more of : a parameter of the query, a number of relational databases for the query, a size of a data field to be searched for the query, an availability of resources of a system maintaining the database engine, a number of relational database tables to be employed for the query, a limitation imposed on a size of a query result set, a number of columns of data to be returned in a query result set, a cost of a similar stored query and/or a number of function calls for the query.

31. (Original) The method of claim 30, further comprising:

assigning a score to the query based on said evaluating, wherein said submitting occurs when the score is less than the threshold value.

32. (Original) The method of claim 31, wherein said assigning comprises:

assigning a fixed value to a plurality of system performance variables;

determining a cost of the system query based on a weighted evaluation of each assigned variables.

33. (Original) The method of claim 31, further comprising:

storing the query and the determined cost of the query.

34. (Canceled)

35. (Original) The method of claim 28, wherein said threshold value is determined based on a category of a user submitting the query.

36. (Original) The method of claim 35, wherein the category of the user is determined based on a history of queries submitted by the user.

37. (Original) The method of claim 36, wherein said history of queries comprises histories of scores of previous queries submitted by the user.

38. (Original) The method of claim 35, wherein the category comprises one of a plurality of categories of increasing accessibility rights to search the database.

39. (Original) The method of claim 28, further comprising:

rejecting the query if the system usage surpasses the threshold value.

40. (Original) The method of claim 39, wherein said rejecting comprises:

offering to provide a portion of a result of the rejected query to the user;

submitting the rejected query to the server; and

      providing a portion of the result of the query to the user.

      41. (Original) The method of claim 39, further comprising:

offering an alternative query to the user after said rejecting.

      42. (Original) The method of claim 28, further comprising:

editing the query if the system usage surpasses the threshold value.

      43. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 42, wherein said editing further

comprises at least one one or more of:

      providing an alternate search parameter, and/or providing a limit on the number of

results for the query.

      44. (Original) The method of claim 28, further comprising:

transmitting a result of the search after said submitting.

      45. (Original) The method of claim 28, wherein said receiving, evaluating and

submitting are performed by a screening server that receives queries directed to a database

engine.

      46. (Original) The method of claim 28, wherein the database query comprises

structured query language.

      47. (Original) The method of claim 28, further comprising:

storing the query.

      48. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium encoded with processing

instructions for implementing a method, performed by a computer, for controlling access to

database information, the method comprising:

      receiving a database query directed to a database engine;

      initially evaluating at least one system performance characteristic associated with

at least one database engine, selected from one or more of system management parameters of

said at least one database engine, a user-access record of said at least one database engine, and

the query to determine system usage of said at least one database engine, prior to submission of

the query to the database engine; and

      submitting the query to the database engine if the system usage does not surpass a

threshold value.

49. (Canceled)

50. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for controlling access to database information, comprising:

a processor; and

a memory in communication with the processor, the memory for storing a plurality of processing instructions directing the processor to:

receive a database query directed to a database engine;

initially evaluate at least one system performance characteristic associated with at least one database engine, selected from one or more of system management parameters of said at least one database engine, a user-access record of said at least one database engine, and the query to determine system usage of said at least one database engine, prior to submission of the query to the database engine; and

submit the query to the database engine if the system usage does not surpass a threshold value.

51. (Currently Amended) A method for controlling access to database information, comprising:

receiving a database query directed to a database engine;

initially evaluating at least one system performance characteristic associated with at least one database engine, selected from one or more of system management parameters of said at least one database engine, a user-access record of said at least one database engine, and the query against system usage of said at least one database engine, prior to submission to the database engine; and

editing the query if the system usage surpasses a threshold value.

52. (Original) The method of claim 51, wherein said receiving further comprises:

receiving the database query from a user.

53. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 51, wherein said evaluating the query to determine system usage further comprises:

evaluating the query based on at least one one or more of : a parameter of the

query, a number of relational databases for the query, a size of a data field to be searched for the query, an availability of resources of a system maintaining the database engine, a number of relational database tables to be employed for the query, a limitation imposed on a size of a query result set, a number of columns of data to be returned in a query result set, a cost of a similar stored query and/or a number of function calls for the query.

54. (Original) The method of claim 53, further comprising:

assigning a score to the query based on said evaluating, wherein said rejecting occurs when the score surpasses the threshold value.

55. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 54, wherein said assigning comprises:

assigning a value to a plurality of system performance variables;

determining a cost of the system query based on a weighted evaluation of ~~at least one~~ one or more of said variables.

56. (Original) The method of claim 54, further comprising:

storing the query and the determined cost of the query.

57. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 51, wherein said system management parameters ~~usage~~ comprises ~~at least one~~ one or more of:

estimated processor usage, estimated memory usage, input/output resource usage and/or disk resource usage for a system maintaining the database engine to process the query.

58. (Original) The method of claim 51, wherein said threshold value is determined based on a category of a user submitting the query.

59. (Original) The method of claim 58, wherein the category of the user is determined based on a history of queries submitted by the user.

60. (Original) The method of claim 59, wherein said history of queries comprises histories of scores of previous queries submitted by the user.

61. (Original) The method of claim 58, wherein the category comprises one of a plurality of categories of increasing accessibility rights to search the database.

62. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 51, wherein said editing further comprises ~~at least one~~ one or more of:

providing an alternate search parameter, and/or providing a limit on the number of results for the query.

63. (Original) The method of claim 62, further comprising:

submitting the query to the database engine after said editing.

64. (Original) The method of claim 63, further comprising:

transmitting a result of the query after said submitting.

65. (Original) The method of claim 51, further comprising:

submitting the edited query to the database engine if the system usage surpasses a threshold value; and

transmitting a result based on the query after said submitting.

66. (Original) The method of claim 51, wherein said receiving, evaluating and editing are performed by a screening server that intercepts queries directed to a database engine.

67. (Original) The method of claim 51, wherein said editing further comprises: substantially optimizing the query for usage of system resources.

68. (Original) The method of claim 51, wherein said editing comprises:

offering to provide a portion of a result of the rejected query to the user;

submitting the rejected query to the server; and

providing a portion of the result of the query to the user.

69. (Original) The method of claim 51, wherein the database query comprises structured query language.

70. (Original) The method of claim 51, further comprising:

storing the query.

71. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium encoded with processing instructions for implementing a method, performed by a computer, for controlling access to database information, the method comprising:

receiving a database query directed to a database engine;

initially evaluating at least one system performance characteristic associated with at least one database engine, selected from one or more of system management parameters of said at least one database engine, a user-access record of said at least one database engine, and

the query against system usage <u>of said at least one database engine</u>, prior to submission to the database engine; and

editing the query if the system usage surpasses a threshold value.

72. (Canceled)

73. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for controlling access to database information, comprising:

a processor; and

a memory in communication with the processor, the memory for storing a plurality of processing instructions directing the processor to:

receive a database query directed to a database engine;

<u>initially</u> evaluate at least one system performance characteristic associated with at least one database engine<u>, selected from one or more of</u> system management parameters <u>of said at least one database engine</u>, a user-access record <u>of said at least one database engine</u>, and the query against system usage <u>of said at least one database engine</u>, prior to submission to the database engine; and

edit the query if the system usage surpasses a threshold value.

74. (Currently Amended) A method for controlling access to database information, comprising:

receiving a database query directed to a database engine;

<u>initially</u> evaluating at least one system performance characteristic associated with at least one database engine<u>, selected from one or more of</u> system management parameters <u>of said at least one database engine</u>, a user-access record <u>of said at least one database engine</u>, and the query against system usage <u>of said at least one database engine</u>, prior to submission to the database engine; and

if the system usage surpasses a threshold value, performing at least one <u>one or more</u> of the following: submitting the query to the database engine with a limit on a number of returns responsive to the query, editing the query, and<u>/or</u> rejecting the query.

75. (Original) The method of claim 74, wherein said receiving further comprises:

receiving the database query from a user.

76. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 74, wherein said evaluating the query to determine system usage further comprises:

evaluating the query based on ~~at least one~~ one or more of: a parameter of the query, a number of relational databases for the query, a size of a data field to be searched for the query, an availability of resources of a system maintaining the database engine, a number of relational database tables to be employed for the query, a limitation imposed on a size of a query result set, a number of columns of data to be returned in a query result set, a cost of a similar stored query and/or a number of function calls for the query.

77. (Original) The method of claim 76, further comprising:

assigning a score to the query based on said evaluating, wherein said rejecting occurs when the score surpasses the threshold value.

78. (Original) The method of claim 77, wherein said assigning comprises:

assigning a fixed value to a plurality of system performance variables;

determining a cost of the system query based on a weighted evaluation of each assigned variables.

79. (Original) The method of claim 77, further comprising:

storing the query and the determined cost of the query.

80. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 74, wherein said system management parameters ~~usage~~ comprises ~~at least one~~ one or more of:

estimated processor usage, estimated memory usage, input/output resource usage and/or disk resource usage for a system maintaining the database engine to process the query.

81. (Original) The method of claim 74, wherein said threshold value is determined based on a category of a user submitting the query.

82. (Original) The method of claim 81, wherein the category of the user is determined based on a history of queries submitted by the user.

83. (Original) The method of claim 82, wherein said history of queries comprises histories of scores of previous queries submitted by the user.

84. (Original) The method of claim 81, wherein the category comprises one of a plurality of categories of increasing accessibility rights to search the database.

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85. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 74, wherein said editing comprises ~~at least one~~ one or more of:

providing an alternate search parameter, and/or providing a limit on the number of results for the query.

86. (Original) The method of claim 74, further comprises:

submitting the query to the database engine if the system usage is less than the threshold value.

87. (Original) The method of claim 74, further comprising:

determining a result based on the query; and

transmitting the result to a party from which the query originated.

88. (Original) The method of claim 74, wherein said receiving, evaluating and editing are performed by a screening server that intercepts queries directed to a database engine.

89. (Original) The method of claim 74, wherein said editing further comprises: substantially optimizing the query for usage of system resources.

90. (Original) The method of claim 74, wherein said rejecting comprises:

offering to provide a portion of a result of the rejected query to the user;

submitting the rejected query to the server; and

providing a portion of the result of the query to the user.

91. (Original) The method of claim 74, wherein the database query comprises structured query language.

92. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium encoded with processing instructions for implementing a method, performed by a computer, for controlling access to database information, the method comprising:

receiving a database query directed to a database engine;

initially evaluating at least one system performance characteristic associated with at least one database engine, selected from one or more of system management parameters of said at least one database engine, a user-access record of said at least one database engine, and the query against system usage of said at least one database engine, prior to submission to the database engine; and

if the system usage surpasses a threshold value, performing ~~at least one~~ one or more of the following: submitting the query to the database engine with a limit on a number of returns responsive to the query, editing the query, and/or rejecting the query.

93. (Canceled)

94. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for controlling access to database information, comprising:

a processor; and

a memory in communication with the processor, the memory for storing a plurality of processing instructions directing the processor to:

receive a database query directed to a database engine;

initially evaluate at least one system performance characteristic associated with at least one database engine, selected from one or more of system management parameters of said at least one database engine, a user-access record of said at least one database engine, and the query against system usage of said at least one database engine, prior to submission to the database engine; and

perform ~~at least one~~ one or more of the following, if the system usage surpasses a threshold value: submit the query to the database engine with a limit on a number of returns responsive to the query, edit the query, and/or reject the query.

95. (Currently Amended) A method for querying a database, comprising:

initially evaluating at least one system performance characteristic associated with at least one database engine, selected from one or more of system management parameters of said at least one database engine, a user-access record of said at least one database engine, and the query to determine system usage of said at least one database engine, prior to submission of the query to the database engine;

transmitting a query to a search engine; and

receiving one of: a rejection of the query and a revised search criterion, prior to receiving a search result based on the query.

96. (Currently Amended) A method for querying a database, comprising:

initially evaluating at least one system performance characteristic associated with

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at least one database engine, selected from one or more of system management parameters of said at least one database engine, a user-access record of said at least one database engine, and the query to determine system usage of said at least one database engine, prior to submission of the query to the database engine;

transmitting a query to a database engine; and

receiving one of: a rejection of the query and a revised search criterion, prior to submission of the query to the database engine

97. (Currently Amended) A method for selectively controlling queries to a database comprising:

establishing a threshold value for system usage for a database query;

activating a query screening process for a database engine wherein the system usage for the database query; and

initially evaluating at least one system performance characteristic associated with at least one database engine, selected from one or more of system management parameters of said at least one database engine, a user-access record of said at least one database engine, and the query to determine system usage of said at least one database engine, prior to submission of the query to the database engine.

98. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 97, wherein if the system usage surpasses the threshold value, the query screening process performs at least one one or more of the following: the query is submitted to the database engine with a limit on a number of returns responsive to the query, the query is edited, and/or the query is rejected.

99. (Original) The method of claim 97, wherein the database query comprises structured query language.

100. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable medium encoded with processing instructions for implementing a method, performed by a computer, for selectively controlling queries to a database, the method comprising:

establishing a threshold value for system usage for a database query;

activating a query screening process for a database engine wherein the system usage for the database query; and

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<u>initially</u> evaluating at least one system performance characteristic associated with at least one database engine, selected from one or more of system management parameters <u>of said at least one database engine</u>, a user-access record <u>of said at least one database engine</u>, and the query to determine system usage <u>of said at least one database engine</u>, prior to submission of the query to the database engine.

101. (Canceled)

102. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for selectively controlling queries to a database, comprising:

a processor; and

a memory in communication with the processor, the memory for storing a plurality of processing instructions directing the processor to:

establish a threshold value for system usage for a database query;

~~activate a query screening process for a database engine wherein the system usage for the database query;~~ and

<u>initially</u> evaluating at least one system performance characteristic associated with at least one database engine, selected from one or more of system management parameters <u>of said at least one database engine</u>, a user-access record <u>of said at least one database engine</u>, and the query to determine system usage <u>of said at least one database engine</u>, prior to submission of the query to the database engine.

103. (Currently Amended) A method for controlling access to database information performed by a screening server, comprising:

receiving, from a user terminal, a database query directed to a database engine;

<u>initially</u> evaluating at least one system performance characteristic associated with at least one database engine, selected from one or more of system management parameters <u>of said at least one database engine</u>, a user-access record <u>of said at least one database engine</u>, and the database query to determine system usage of the query at the database engine, prior to submission of the query to the database engine, said evaluating of the database query based on ~~at least one~~ <u>one or more</u> of:

a parameter of the query, a number of relational databases for the query, a size of

a data field to be searched for the query, an availability of resources of a system maintaining the database engine, a number of relational database tables to be employed for the query, a limitation imposed on a size of a query result set, a number of columns of data to be returned in a query result set, a cost of a similar stored query and/or a number of function calls for the query;

determining a threshold value for system usage of the database engine, wherein the threshold value is based on ~~at least one~~ one or more of: estimated processor usage, estimated memory usage, input/output resource usage and disk resource usage of the database engine; and/or

if the system usage surpasses a threshold value, performing ~~at least one~~ one or more of the following: submitting the query to the database engine with a limit on a number of returns responsive to the query, editing the query, and/or rejecting the query.

104. (Original) The method of claim 103, further comprising:

monitoring the actual system usage of the query after submission to the database engine; and

storing the database query and the actual system usage.

105. (Currently Amended) A method for controlling access to database information performed by a screening server, comprising:

receiving, from a user terminal, a structured query language (SQL) query directed to a separate database engine;

initially evaluating at least one system performance characteristic associated with at least one database engine, selected from one or more of system management parameters of said at least one database engine, a user-access record of said at least one database engine, and the database query to determine system usage of the query at the database engine, prior to submission of the query to the database engine, said evaluating of the database query based on ~~at least one~~ one or more of:

a parameter of the SQL query, a number of relational databases for the SQL query, a size of a data field to be searched for the SQL query, an availability of resources of the database engine, a number of relational database tables to be employed for the SQL query, a limitation imposed on a size of a query result set, a number of columns of data to be returned in a

query result set, a cost of a similar stored SQL query and/or a number of function calls for the query;

determining a threshold value for system usage of the database engine, wherein the threshold value is based on ~~at least one~~ one or more of: estimated processor usage, estimated memory usage, input/output resource usage and/or disk resource usage of the database engine;

if the system usage surpasses a threshold value, performing ~~at least one~~ one or more of the following: submitting the SQL query to the database engine with a limit on a number of returns responsive to the SQL query, editing the SQL query, and/or rejecting the SQL query;

monitoring the actual system usage of the SQL query after submission to the database engine; and

storing the SQL query and the actual system usage.

NEW CLAIMS:

106. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein said system management parameters comprise one or more of:

estimated processor usage, estimated memory usage, input/output resource usage and/or disk resource usage for a system maintaining the database engine to process the query.

107. (New) the method of claim 1, wherein said user-access record further comprises an assigned accessibility right of a user based on:

a class or category of a user, historical system resource requirements of the user's previous queries and the user's previously evaluated queries.

108. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 25, wherein said system management parameters comprise one or more of:

estimated processor usage, estimated memory usage, input/output resource usage and/or disk resource usage for a system maintaining the database engine to process the query.

109. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 25, wherein said evaluating the query to determine system usage further comprises:

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evaluating the query based on one or more of: a parameter of the query, a number of relational databases used by the query, a size of a data field to be searched for the query, an availability of resources of a system maintaining the database engine, a number of relational database tables to be employed for the query, a limitation imposed on a size of a query result set, a number of columns of data to be returned in a query result set, a cost of a similar stored query and/or a number of function calls for the query.

110. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 108, further comprising: assigning a score to the query based on said evaluating, wherein said rejecting occurs when the score surpasses the threshold value.

111. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 109, wherein said assigning comprises:

assigning a value to a plurality of system performance variables;
determining a cost of the query based on a weighted evaluation of at least one one or more of said variables.

112. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 108, further comprising: storing the query and the determined cost of the query.

113. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 25, further comprising: submitting the query to the search engine if the system usage is less than the threshold value.

114. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 25, wherein said rejecting further comprises:

editing the query so that the system usage is less than the threshold value; and submitting the query to the database engine.

115. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 114, wherein said editing comprises one or more of:

providing an alternate search parameter, and/or providing a limit on the number of results for the query.

116. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 114, further comprising:

transmitting a result of the query, after said submitting.

117. (New) The apparatus of claim 27, wherein system management parameters

comprise one or more of:

estimated processor usage, estimated memory usage, input/output resource usage and disk resource usage for a system maintaining the database engine to process the query.

118. (New) The apparatus of claim 27, wherein said threshold value is determined based on a category of a user submitting the query.

119. (New) The apparatus of claim 118, wherein the category of the user is determined based on a history of queries submitted by the user.

120. (New) The apparatus of claim 119, wherein said history of queries comprises histories of scores of previous queries submitted by the user.

121. (New) The apparatus of claim 118, wherein the category comprises one of a plurality of categories of increasing accessibility rights to search the database.

122. (New) A system for screening queries on a query-by-query basis, comprising:

receiving a database query directed to a database engine;

initially evaluating at least one system performance characteristic selected from potential impact on system resources, system management parameters, and/or a user-access record.

evaluating said query to determine system usage, prior to submission of the query to the database engine;

rejecting said query if the system usage surpasses a threshold value.

123. (New) The system of claim 122, wherein said receiving further comprises: receiving the database query from a user.

124. (New) The system of claim 122, wherein said system management parameters comprise one or more of:

estimated processor usage, estimated memory usage, input/output resource usage and/or disk resource usage for a system maintaining the database engine to process the query

125. (New) The system of claim 122, further comprising:
submitting the query to the search engine if the system usage is less than the threshold value.

126. (New) The system of claim 122, wherein said rejecting further comprises:

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editing the query so that the system usage is less than the threshold value; and

submitting the query to the database engine.

127. (New) The system of claim 126, wherein said editing comprises one or more of:

providing an alternate search parameter, and/or providing a limit on the number of results for the query.

128. (New) The system of claim 126, further comprising:

transmitting a result of the query, after said submitting.

129. (New) The system of claim 128, wherein said transmitting further comprises:

transmitting a portion of the result of the query to a user.

130. (New) The system of claim 126, wherein said editing further comprises:

substantially optimizing the query for usage of system resources.

131. (New) The system of claim 126, wherein said submitting comprises:

submitting the query to a second database engine.

132. (New) The system of claim 122, wherein said rejecting comprises:

offering to provide a portion of a result of the rejected query to the user;

submitting the rejected query to the server; and

providing a portion of the result of the query to the user.

133. (New) The system of claim 122, wherein said rejecting further comprises:

offering an alternative query in place of the rejected query.

134. (New) The system of claim 122, wherein said receiving,

evaluating and rejecting are performed by a screening server prior to submission of the query to a database engine.

135. (New) The system of claim 122, wherein the database query comprises structured query language.

136. (New) The system of claim 122, further comprising:

storing the query.

137. (New) The method of claim 28, wherein said system management

parameters comprise one or more of:

estimated processor usage, estimated memory usage, input/output resource usage, historic performance of a similar query and/or disk resource usage for a system maintaining the database engine to process the query.

138. (New) The method of claim 28, wherein said user-access record further comprises an assigned accessibility right of a user based on:

a class or category of a user,

historical system resource requirements of the user's previous queries and the user's previously evaluated queries.

139. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 48, wherein said system management parameters comprise ~~at least one~~ one or more of:

estimated processor usage, estimated memory usage, input/output resource usage, historic performance of a similar query and/or disk resource usage for a system maintaining the database engine to process the query.

140. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 48, further comprising:

rejecting the query if the system usage surpasses the threshold value.

141. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 140, wherein said rejecting further comprises:

offering to provide a portion of a result of the rejected query to the user;

submitting the rejected query to the server; and providing a portion of the result of the query to the user.

142. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 140, further comprising:

offering an alternative query to the user after said rejecting.

143. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 48, further comprising:

editing the query if the system usage surpasses the threshold value.

144. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 143, wherein said editing further comprises one or more of:

providing an alternate search parameter, and/or providing a limit on the number of results for the query.

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145. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 48, further comprising:

transmitting a result of the search after said submitting.

146. (New) The apparatus of claim 50, wherein said threshold value is determined based on a category of a user submitting the query.

147.(New) The apparatus of claim 146, wherein the category comprises one of a plurality of categories of increasing accessibility rights to search the database.

148.(New) The apparatus of claim 50, further comprising means for rejecting the query if the system usage surpasses the threshold value.

149.   (New) A system for screening queries on a query-by-query basis, comprising:

receiving a database query directed to a database engine;

initially evaluating at least one system performance characteristic selected from potential impact on system resources, system management parameters and/or a user-access record.

evaluating said query to determine system usage, prior to submission of the query to the database engine;

submitting said query to the database engine if the system usage does not surpass a threshold value.

150. (New) The system of claim 149, wherein said receiving further comprises:

receiving the database query from a user.

151. (New) The system of claim 149, wherein said system management parameters comprise one or more of:

estimated processor usage, estimated memory usage, input/output resource usage, historic performance of a similar query and/or disk resource usage for a system maintaining the database engine to process the query.

152. (New) The system of claim 149, further comprising:

editing the query if the system usage surpasses the threshold value.

153. (New) The system of claim 152, wherein said editing further comprises one or more of:

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providing an alternate search parameter, and/or providing a limit on the number of results for the query.

154. (New) The system of claim 149, further comprising:

transmitting a result of the search after said submitting.

155. (New) The system of claim 149, wherein said receiving, evaluating and submitting are performed by a screening server that receives queries directed to a database engine.

156. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 71, wherein said evaluating the query against system usage further comprises:

evaluating the query based on one or more of: a parameter of the query, a number of relational databases used by the query, a size of a data field to be searched for the query, an availability of resources of a system maintaining the database engine, a number of relational database tables to be employed for the query, a limitation imposed on a size of a query result set, a number of columns of data to be returned in a query result set, a cost of a similar stored query and/or a number of function calls for the query.

157. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 156, further comprising:

assigning a score to the query based on said evaluating, wherein said rejecting occurs when the score surpasses the threshold value.

158. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 157, wherein said assigning comprises:

assigning a value to a plurality of system performance variables;

determining a cost of the based on a weighted evaluation of one or more of said variables.

159. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 156, further comprising:

storing the query and the determined cost of the query.

160. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 156, wherein said system management parameters comprise one or more of:

estimated processor usage, estimated memory usage, input/output resource usage and/or disk resource usage for a system maintaining the database engine to process the query.

161. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 71, wherein said receiving, evaluating and editing are performed by a screening server that intercepts queries directed to a database engine.

162. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 71, wherein said editing further comprises:
substantially optimizing the query for usage of system resources.

163. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 71, wherein said editing comprises:

offering to provide a portion of a result of the rejected query to the user;
submitting the rejected query to the server; and

providing a portion of the result of the query to the user.

164. (New) The apparatus of claim 73, wherein said system management parameters comprise one or more of: estimated processor usage, estimated memory usage, input/output resource usage and disk resource usage for a system maintaining the database engine to process the query.

165.(New) The apparatus of claim 73, wherein said threshold value is determined based on a category of a user submitting the query.

166.(New) The apparatus of claim 165, wherein the category of the user is determined based on a history of queries submitted by the user.

167.(New) The apparatus of claim 166, wherein said history of queries comprises histories of scores of previous queries submitted by the user.

168.(New) The apparatus of claim 165, wherein the category comprises one of a plurality of categories of increasing accessibility rights to search the database.

169. (New) A system for screening queries on a query-by-query basis, comprising:

receiving a database query directed to a database engine;

initially evaluating at least one system performance characteristic selected from potential impact on system resources, system management parameters and/or a user-access record.

evaluating said query to determine system usage, prior to submission of the query to the database engine;

editing said query if the system usage surpasses a threshold value.

170. (New) The system of claim 169, wherein said receiving further comprises:

receiving the database query from a user.

171. (New) The system of claim 169, wherein said system management parameters comprise one or more of:

estimated processor usage, estimated memory usage, input/output resource usage and/or disk resource usage for a system maintaining the database engine to process the query.

172. (New) The system of claim 169, wherein said editing further comprises one or more of:

providing an alternate search parameter, and/or providing a limit on the number of results for the query.

173. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 92, wherein said system management parameters comprise one or more of:

estimated processor usage, estimated memory usage, input/output resource usage and/or disk resource usage for a system maintaining the database engine to process the query

174. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 92, wherein said evaluating the query against system usage further comprises:

evaluating the query based on one or more of: a parameter of the query, a number of relational databases for the query, a size of a data field to be searched for the query, an availability of resources of a system maintaining the database engine, a number of relational database tables to be employed for the query, a limitation imposed on a size of a query result set, a number of columns of data to be returned in a query result set, a cost of a similar stored query and/or a number of function calls for the query.

175. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 173, further comprising:

assigning a score to the query based on said evaluating, wherein said rejecting occurs when the score surpasses the threshold value.

176. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 174, wherein said assigning

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comprises:

assigning a fixed value to a plurality of system performance variables;

determining a cost of the system query based on a weighted evaluation of each

assigned variables.

177. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 175, further comprising:

storing the query and the determined cost of the query.

178. (New) The computer-readable medium of claim 92, wherein said editing

comprises at least one one or more of:

providing an alternate search parameter, and providing a limit on the number of

results for the query.

179. (New) A system for screening queries on a query-by-query basis,

comprising:

receiving a database query directed to a database engine;

initially evaluating at least one system performance characteristic selected from

potential impact on system resources, system management parameters and/or a user-access

record.

evaluating said query to determine system usage, prior to submission of the query

to the database engine;

performing one or more of the following: submitting the query to the database

engine with a limit on a number of returns responsive to the query, editing the query, and

rejecting the query.

180. (New) The system of claim 179, wherein said receiving further comprises:

receiving the database query from a user.

181. (New) The system of claim 179, wherein said system management

parameters comprise one or more of:

estimated processor usage, estimated memory usage, input/output resource usage

and/or disk resource usage for a system maintaining the database engine to process the query.

182. (New) The system of claim 179, wherein said receiving, evaluating and

editing are performed by a screening server that intercepts queries directed to a database engine.

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183. (New) The system of claim 179, wherein said editing further comprises:

substantially optimizing the query for usage of system resources.

184. (New) The system of claim 179, wherein said rejecting comprises:

offering to provide a portion of a result of the rejected query to the user;

submitting the rejected query to the server; and

providing a portion of the result of the query to the user.